



MEMO



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State Emergency Management: Praying for the Best, Preparing for the Worst

Benjamin Franklin once remarked that “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

That philosophy resonates well with the staff of the North Carolina Emergency Management division whose business and mission is to ensure that the state is adequately prepared to respond to and recover from any type of natural or man-made disaster.

“Because disasters start and end at the local level, our job is to support the counties and communities with the training and resources they need so they are adequately prepared to handle emergencies,” said Doug Hoell, director of NCEM.

The division sponsored more than 200 classes across the state in 2010 to train more than 3,500 first responders and emergency management staff how to react to various types of crisis. Courses included: disaster recovery and response, mass shootings response, managing people in disasters, hazardous chemical response, managing debris after a disaster, the incident command system, handling mass fatalities, assessing damages from disasters, and managing mass care for communities.

In addition, the division helped plan, coordinate, fund and implement dozens of local or regional training exercises to give local and state agencies the opportunity to test their communication, coordination and response skills before an incident occurs. Some of the more notable exercises during 2010 included:

- Governor’s terrorism exercise – Elected and appointed leaders from the Cabinet, Governor’s Office, three universities and several major area hospitals spent a day discussing the roles and responsibilities of their respective organizations in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a planned and coordinated terrorist attack on several local college campuses. It was the first-ever such exercise conducted in the state.
- Hurricane exercise – State Emergency Response Team members and emergency management staff from dozens of eastern counties trained together to review and rehearse their responsibilities to respond to a significant hurricane strike on the state. Several months later, many of those counties would use those lessons learned to prepare for Hurricane Earl and respond to flooding from Tropical Storm Nicole.
- Helo-Aquatic Rescue Team training – Dozens of first responders, NCEM staff, law enforcement and medical agencies trained with Army National Guard aviators on four occasions to practice their ability to rescue victims by extracting them from severely flooded or isolated mountainous areas. The teams used their skills last fall to extract several lost and/or injured hikers in the mountains.
- State port safety – Eight law enforcement and emergency management agencies rehearsed coordinated response to a terrorist event at the state port in Morehead



Participants discuss agency responsibilities during the Governor's Terrorism Exercise held in February 2010.

Continued

- Nuclear power plant exercises— Emergency management, police, fire, rescue, sheriff, highway patrol, school officials and others from the state and surrounding counties practiced their ability to notify and protect the public in the unlikely event of an incident at the Brunswick or Catawba nuclear power plants.
- Community Emergency Response Team training – The CERT program expanded to include six teen programs. More than 70 teenagers are now trained in the basics of disaster response so they can help their neighbors in the early minutes and hours following a disaster.
- Hazardous materials response training– More than 200 first responders and emergency management staff from four metropolitan areas trained together with Norfolk Southern and CSX to respond to potentially explosive hazmat incidents along major freight shipping corridors.
- All-hazard response training – More than 90 Yancey County emergency management staff and first responders trained together in the county’s largest-ever emergency response exercise. The week-long drill tested their capabilities in hostage negotiation, search and rescue, fire suppression and emergency medical response.
- Emergency medical response - Multiple county response agencies teamed up with Campbell University pharmacy students to rehearse distributing medicine in response to a biological event. A separate medical support drill tested coordination and response between the emergency management and medical communities in Wake County.
- Dam safety - State Emergency Management staff worked with eight western counties and a utility company to test response capabilities to flooding caused by a dam failure. The experience was timely, since NCEM worked with Montgomery County to respond to a potential dam failure.



The NC Task Force 10 swift water rescue team searches for stranded residents after a week of severe rains saturated much of the eastern part of the state in late September and early October.

Many counties also participated in search and rescue exercises, while others rehearsed activating a point-of-distribution system that could disseminate essential commodities such as water and food following a disaster.

“We constantly train and exercise because we have to be prepared to respond to any type of event or disaster,” said Hoell. “You pray for the best, but train for the worst so you know you are ready, because real disasters are going to happen.”

During 2010, NCEM staff also helped local communities respond to disasters by providing resources, equipment and expertise.

For instance, NCEM staff provided on-scene Regional Response Team support at various hazardous materials incidents (such as the PETN spill at the Morehead City Port), gasoline tanker crashes, passenger train wrecks, airplane crashes, mudslides in the mountains, dam failures, a major gasoline tank farm fire in Greensboro and a mass injury incident at a Bladen County blueberry plant.

And when a significant disaster does strike, NCEM works with local communities to help their residents and businesses recover as quickly as possible. Damage assessment teams from the county, state and sometimes federal governments inventory the destruction to determine what financial assistance may be available to help disaster survivors. This year, the division helped nearly 500 residents and business owners recover from tornados in Davidson and Guilford counties in March, then helped dozens more residents in Hoke and Lincoln counties recover after tornados struck there.

But the largest coordinated response came during the peak of hurricane season. Local and state emergency management agencies watched carefully as Hurricane Earl approached the coast just before Labor Day. Although portions of six counties evacuated as a precautionary measure, the state was largely spared any major destruction.

During the last week of September the remnants of Tropical Storm Nicole saturated eastern North Carolina adding more rain to areas that were soaked by summer storms just days before. Hundreds of homes and businesses were flooded as between 5-24 inches of rain fell in the coastal plains. Swift water rescue teams rescued more than 250 people from flooded houses and cars, most in Bertie County. Eight people died as a result of storm-related vehicle crashes. State and federal emergency management employees in 14 disaster recovery centers helped nearly 3,000 people apply for financial assistance in the weeks following the storm. In fact, the first disaster recovery center opened within 20 hours of receiving the presidential disaster declaration. By late fall, more than \$5.1 million in federal and state grants and loans was distributed to help residents and business owners in 15 counties recover from the flooding.

Between responding to disasters and improving skills through training, division staff develop new capabilities or initiatives that can mitigate threats or improve disaster response. In 2010, North Carolina Emergency Management improved the state's disaster readiness posture through deliberate and coordinated planning amongst several key governmental and private agencies. The division also has led the country in identifying and mitigating a host of natural risks, so that individuals can accurately assess their own risk in a variety of areas. New initiatives in 2010, included:



NCEM updated its oil spill response plan to address potential impacts to North Carolina from the BP Deepwater Horizon explosion in the Gulf of Mexico.

- Developed an Integrated Risk Management system using detailed information that has been collected about each building and structure in four pilot counties. The information is used to assess the level of risk and probability that each facility has for being impacted by flood, tornado, hurricane or other such natural disaster. Community leaders and state officials can then plan ways to minimize risks and potential service disruptions.
- Developed a template plan for licensed care facilities to help the long-term care industry prepare their residents and staff for any type of disaster or emergency. The plan helps facilities ensure that the appropriate nutrition, medication and staffing are in place to help them evacuate or shelter indoors in an emergency.
- Developed a template plan that helps counties recover faster after disasters by outlining agency responsibilities and defining roles in 16 different areas to improve efficiency and eliminate confusion between various public and private responders.
- Updated the state's 20-year-old oil spill response plan to address potential impacts to North Carolina from the unprecedented oil leak from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Added scanner and microchip capabilities for 40 Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailers to help pet owners track and recover their lost pets faster if separated during an emergency.
- Expanded capabilities of NC SPARTA, the state's primary data management system used during emergencies, to: enable counties to identify vulnerable populations before disaster strikes; collect preliminary damage assessment information in real time; monitor fuel supplies; and incorporate airport, bridges, dams, armories and other critical infrastructure information.
- Closed out 115 hazard mitigation projects to minimize damage from any future natural disasters.
- Launched a web-based registration system for students who want easier access to training courses offered through the division and, for the first time, access to their personal training records.

"North Carolina Emergency Management is in the disaster business. We know that it is not a matter of if, but when, the next disaster will occur," said Hoell. "Our mission – and our passion – is to make sure that our state and residents are ready."

Food Safety Task Force: Update in Preparation for Inaugural Conference

The North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task force has continued to develop a comprehensive food defense and response for the state. Since August, the committee has:

- Developed key emergency response plans and incorporated them into the State Emergency Response Plan. Included in the appendices are emergency response plans for food, livestock, crops and produce.
- Addressed the growing number of food outbreaks originating from contamination of leafy greens and other produce at the growers or en route to distribution and retail centers. The Fresh Produce Task Force is developing several solutions to prevent product contamination, improve contamination traceability, and to educate farmers.
- Developed training and exercises on pertinent topics, such as emergency response plans, crisis communication, specific pathogens and threats.

In 2011, the Task Force expects several of its committees to launch new initiatives such as a website, an inter-state conference and a task force-wide series of training courses.

N.C. Division of Emergency Management is working with the task force to develop and offer training in emergency operation procedures, emergency roles and responsibilities and the incident command structure.

The inaugural intra-state conference is scheduled for this spring and will include workshops, training and exercise sessions for county health departments, state agencies and food industry personnel.

For more information, call Tim Johnson, NCEM Human Services assistant manager at 919-715-4077 or tjohnson@ncem.org.

The DuPont Rescue Experience *By Wike Graham, Captain, Charlotte Fire Department*

The DuPont Rescue Experience is a weekend exercise that simulates search and rescue operations in a wilderness environment. The experience offers participants a combination of short classes followed by a lost person scenario, which runs for 48 hours. The Experience incorporates incident management teams, swift water rescue teams, search and rescue teams as well as medical assistance teams from state and local emergency response agencies.

Henderson County Rescue, Haywood County Emergency Services and Brevard Rescue established the training exercise in 2005 to replace Burke County's Extended Medical Exercise which ended the year before. The group asked the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources if they could host the exercise in the DuPont State Forest because of the forest's 10,000 acres of different terrain. The park offered enough landscape variations to make an excellent exercise for years to come. That first year, there were 45 participants.

The DuPont Rescue Experience training compliments a spring search and rescue training course by offering rope rescue techniques for beginning and advanced rescuers, wilderness EMS, search theory, canine search and land navigation.

The training has grown considerably in the past five years.



Participants practice rescue techniques during the DuPont Rescue Experience held in the DuPont State Forest, fall 2010.

In 2006, N.C. Division of Emergency Management provided grant money to assist with planning and operational needs for the exercise. Participation grew to more than 100 state and local responders. A lead-in class the week before the exercise reviews core emergency response functions, such as managing land search operations and outlining responsibilities for the planning section chief, operations section chief and situation unit leader for wilderness search and rescue. During the 2006 exercise the Transylvania County Sheriff's Department requested assistance with a search for a missing elderly couple in Pisgah National Forest. The exercise was halted and the exercise participants became responders, playing a critical role in what turned out to be a double murder.



Students discuss rescue strategies as part of the DuPont Rescue Experience, fall 2010.

In 2008, the North Carolina Search and Rescue Advisory Council became one of the sponsors for the exercise and began holding their fall meetings at the exercise. The exercise grew to include a communications section and began offering training for field communications personnel. The North Carolina Highway Patrol, Charlotte Fire Department Field Communications Unit and the North Carolina State Medical Assistance Team are heavily involved in this effort.

In 2009, the North Carolina Helo Aquatic Rescue Team began using the week prior to the exercise to train its personnel in the DuPont State Forest. The back-to-back training allowed many of the logistical resources necessary for the DuPont Rescue Experience to remain in place, saving taxpayer money. Also, staff from the NCEM Western Branch Office began offering logistical support for the exercise. Their expertise in large incident management was greatly appreciated and quickly became an integral part of the exercise staff. In addition, Wake Canine provide canine instructors for the exercise through their own grant efforts. More than 175 participants attended the exercise that year.



Exercise participants prepare for rescue maneuvers during training at the DuPont State Forest, fall 2010.

In 2010, the National Association for Search and Rescue began offering the Search and Rescue Technician I and II exams during the exercise; it will become an annual offer from now on. Last year marked the transition from using individuals to create incident management teams for each operational period to asking departments to provide an incident management team for the entire weekend. The Asheville Fire Department provided the incident management team in 2010.

Also last year, the North Carolina Search and Rescue Advisory Council presented the David Carter Award to Tim Miller. The David Carter Award recognizes someone who provides outstanding service to the citizens of North Carolina.

The DuPont Rescue Experience has grown and evolved significantly in its short tenure. The exercise strives to offer a combination of field experience coupled with realistic training sessions. One of the cornerstones of the exercise is to provide realistic training for incident management personnel. We have been able to incorporate incident management teams, swift water rescue teams, search and rescue teams as well as elements of North Carolina's urban search and rescue and medical assistance teams. The instructors and staff for the DuPont Rescue Experience look forward to continuing the tradition of providing essential training for the state's responders in the years to come.

For more information, contact Wike Graham, Captain with the Charlotte Fire Department, President of the N.C. Search and Rescue Advisory Council and DuPont Rescue Experience Coordinator at 828-329-8594 or hvillegrahams@gmail.com.

Lakota's Addition Increases NCHART Rescue Capability

Last month, the North Carolina Helicopter and Aquatic Rescue Team (NCHART) took a significant step towards increasing its capability for helicopter based rescue with the addition of the NC National Guard (NCNG) LUH-72 Lakota helicopters based in Morrisville.

Until last year, all HART rescue missions were performed with the NCNG's UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter. Last spring, the team added support from the N.C. State Highway Patrol with a Bell-407 helicopter. Together these aircraft provide an outstanding resource for varying missions statewide, but with the potential for the Blackhawks to be deployed overseas and with law enforcement being the primary mission of the Highway Patrol, the Lakota was identified as being able to fill any potential gaps in resource availability.

An added benefit is that the Lakota cost about half of what the Blackhawk does to operate, or about \$8,700 a day versus \$17,500.

The NCHART crews started training with the LUH-72 Lakota in October using mannequins to rehearse hoist operations. Last month, technician began the "live" phase of training by using real people as practice victims. The training and exercises focus on understanding the difference between the two aircraft.

"There are operating differences for the Guard pilots and rescue technique differences for the responders to become familiar with and practiced when switching between the two helicopters in order to ensure successful rescue attempts," said Derrick Remer, state search and rescue coordinator.

NCHART is a highly specialized search and rescue team which combines North Carolina National Guard aviation assets with the expertise of local rescue technicians. There are more than 30 trained responders across the state that can form mission-ready packages for helicopter-based rescues.

NC Division of Emergency Management is working with the Guard to use the Lakota integration exercises to develop a national policy and procedure standardization protocol for Lakota use in military response. NCHART and the Guard will develop a program that can be used as a model for national implementation.

"Adding the Lakota line of helicopters to the existing aircraft strengthens the state's rescue capability. The agencies involved will work to develop the processes that will become a role model for a national standard for the helicopter as an alternative rescue response vehicle," Sprayberry concluded.



NCHART members prepare for a rescue mission using the LUH-72 Lakota Helicopter during training on December 9, 2010.



Left: NCHART members practice hoisting maneuvers using the LUH-72 Lakota Helicopter during a training exercise December 9, 2010. Right: UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter also used in NCHART missions. (stock photo)



Emergency Management Forum Scheduled for Jan. 12

The North Carolina Emergency Management forum is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 12 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and last until 4 p.m.

Forum discussion topics include: mission ready packaging, resource manager, and improvements to NC SPARTA. Participants also will hear a report from the state interoperable executive committee, an update on TERMS and the 2010-2011 homeland security process, an overview of the integrated risk management project and details about the spring conference.

For those unable to travel, the forum will be held via ConnectPro, a web conferencing and seminar software that allows conference attendees to view and participate from their personal computer.

The forum is held twice annually as a way for local and state emergency management officials to discuss potential threats, legislative changes or other issues that impact the emergency management community.

For more information, contact Brenda Jones at 919-715-9216 or bmjones@ncem.org.

Operations Crazy Train

By Ann Keyes, Washington County Emergency Management

The Roanoke-Albemarle-Pamlico Local Emergency Planning Committee (RAP LEPC) hosted a full-scale regional exercise on December 9th at the Domtar pulp mill in Plymouth. The exercise, titled "Operation Crazy Train," involved both domestic terrorism and hazardous material events. The scenario involved an environmental extremist caused a chemical explosion with a homemade incendiary device.

The explosion caused a liquid chlorate storage tank leak, as well as a release from a railcar that was offloading. Liquid chlorate entered the Roanoke River, which borders the mill. In the scenario, the employee entered the facility, shot two employees, and then took another employee hostage.

Emergency Management Coordinators from the surrounding counties of Camden-Pasquotank, Chowan, Gates, Hertford and Hyde came to support Washington, Martin and Bertie counties and to act as an incident management team.

The Domtar mill presents unique challenges for emergency response. The mill is located in Martin County. However, primary emergency response comes from the town of Plymouth in Washington County. Domtar also borders the Roanoke River, which falls under the jurisdiction of Bertie County.

The exercise was a great success, but as always, there were lessons learned. Exercise participants quickly found that they needed a liaison between the Domtar Emergency Operations Center and the regional command post. Other considerations included ingress/egress, establishing a staging area, alternate command post sites, and the integration of varied management styles.

Exercise participants included Washington County EMS, Hyde County EMS, NCEM, ERAC, RRT-1, SBI, Red Cross, Martin County Sheriff's Office, Washington County Sheriff's Office, Williamston Police Department, Plymouth Police Department, Martin-Tyrrell-Washington Health Department, Plymouth Fire Department, Washington County Hospital, and Washington County GIS/Mapping.

Domtar serves a model among private industry in its proactive approach to emergency preparedness. Domtar is very active in the community, serving on the LEPC, supporting the local volunteer fire departments, and even sharing in the cost of the county emergency notification system.

Operation Crazy Train was funded through a 2009 training and exercise grant award. For more information about the exercise, contact Ann Keyes at akeyes@washconc.org or Mike Stalls at mstalls@martincountync.gov.

RRT TAG/TAC Meet

The Regional Response Team Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet Jan. 20 to discuss several key topics surround the state's hazardous material RRT program. The meeting will be held in Raleigh at the Disaster Recovery Operations Center.

The committee is comprised of staff from NCEM, State Highway Patrol, and the departments of Insurance, Transportation, Agriculture and Environmental and Natural Resources, as well as representatives from the State Bureau of Investigation, Association of Hazardous Material Responders, Association of Fire Chiefs, State Fireman's Association and the Manufacturer and Chemical Industry.

For more information, contact Angelo Owens at 919-715-0465 or Aowens@ncem.org.

Planning Underway for Spring All-Hazards Conference ***By Gary Jones, Executive Director, NC Emergency Management Association***

The North Carolina Emergency Management Association Program Committee is actively planning for the Spring Conference to be held the week of March 13th in Sunset Beach. Program Committee members have met several times to develop the general parameters of the conference, decide upon the timing of meals, breaks and other program activities, and begin to identify potential speakers and topics that will interest anyone in the state's response community.

A draft conference calendar has been developed and committee members have begun contacting potential presenters, to coordinate schedules. In those situations where only a tentative topic has been identified, the members will contact government and volunteer agencies in search of the best possible speaker to cover the particular issue.

Program Committee Chairman Gary Jones emphasized the importance of the team approach to the conference planning process. Committee members have gathered program suggestions from the Fall Conference and through subsequent information exchanges with Association members and NCEM staff.

In addition, he bragged about the efforts of the current conference committee, emphasizing that "during the most recent planning meeting, 13 of the 15 committee members attended either in person or via conference call. This speaks well of the group's desire to develop a meaningful and interesting program that will be valuable to all attendees."

While definitive session topics await speaker confirmation, Jones said the three-day conference will include breakout sessions designed for newcomers to the emergency management community. In addition, eight classes or workshops are planned in conjunction with the conference, with two each Monday and Tuesday afternoon, and four that run from Thursday morning into Friday.

For more information about the spring conference, contact Suzanne Hamby at 336-651-7305 or visit the NC Emergency Management Association's website at <https://ncema.renci.org>.

New Courses Offered

NCEM will soon offer 14 All Hazards position specific courses and one All Hazard Incident Management Team Course (O-305). Course registration will be through TERMS. Registration is currently available for many of the courses; the remaining courses will soon be available.

The All Hazards position specific course begins with unit leader courses and continues with command and general staff courses. The All Hazards Incident Management Team course is the final course in the series. To attend the NIMS ICS All-Hazards Position Specific training, you must have completed the NIMS 100, 200, 300, 700 & 800 courses. In addition, students should be members of 'Type 3' Incident Management Teams, or be working toward becoming members in the future. Prospective students for the All Hazard Incident Management Team Course (O-305) are required to submit the completed NCEM All Hazards course application and register through TERMS. Applicants for all of the All Hazards Position Specific Courses will be prioritized in the following order:

1. Member of a NC AHIMT Type 3 Team or higher.

2. Member of a NC IMT Type 3 Team or higher.
3. Applicant who submitted an AHIMT Application to the NC All Hazard Incident Management Qualification Committee and was awarded full credential.
4. Applicant who submitted above application and was awarded provisional credential.
5. Applicant who submitted above application and is awaiting response.
6. Member of a Type 4 or Type 5 IMT.

After completing registration, applicants will be waitlisted to allow course prioritization. Applicants who are on the waitlist 14 days prior to the course start date will be contacted to provide additional information.

It is highly recommended that individuals wishing to take a general staff course complete at least one subordinate position specific course first. For example, an applicant wishing to take the Operations Section Chief course should complete the Division/Group Supervisor course (The course does not need to be All Hazards). Applicants who do not complete a subordinate position specific course and/or cannot demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the subordinate position(s) under the General Staff course they wish to take will not be allowed to sit for the class.

For more information, contact Chris Call at NCEM, 919-715-6360 or ccall@ncem.org.



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Questions and Comments can be directed to:

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"In the Business of Saving Lives and Protecting Property"

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management was formed in 1977 to coordinate the preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities of all agencies for emergency management within North Carolina. It performs this mission by planning, organizing, staffing, equipping, training, testing and activating emergency management programs during times of need.